

**From:** Olivia Seideman  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 13, 2021 6:57 PM  
**To:** Redistricting - Merced County <Redistricting@countyofmerced.com>  
**Cc:** Aracely G. Gonzalez  
**Subject:** Public Comment on Redistricting Hearing

Hello,

My name is Olivia Seideman and I'm the Civic Engagement Coordinator with Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, a community-based organization that works alongside low-income communities of color in Dos Palos, Delhi, Los Banos, and Planada in Merced County to advocate for local, regional, and state government entities to address their community's needs for the basic elements that make up a safe and healthy community.

I would like to echo the many public comments made in today's session, urging more of the public hearings be held in evenings, at a more accessible time than 1:30pm in the afternoon, when many people are at work. It is clear that the Merced County community is united in requesting that public hearings be held during accessible hours.

Furthermore, I urge the Board to create a more accessible and equitable redistricting process, especially for rural communities throughout the County, for whom the public hearings may be inaccessible. I recommend three ways in which the Board can accomplish this.

First, a telephonic option to listen to and comment at hearings should be available for all public hearings going forward. This would make the redistricting process more accessible to and encourage participation of folks without good internet access or who may have difficulty accessing the internet livestream or email.

Second, while the remote station in Los Banos today is great, I encourage the Board to expand its public engagement in rural parts of the County. There should be outreach and engagement sessions in every district in the County, ensuring that the redistricting process is accessible to folks who cannot travel to Merced City.

Finally, I applaud the inclusion of Spanish and Hmong interpreters at today's in-person sessions and the stated commitment to translated transcripts of these proceedings, but I encourage the Board to expand its language access program in the redistricting process. Promotional materials for all public hearings should be translated immediately and should be distributed in communities with high densities of people who speak a language other than English. It is imperative that the Board and Board staff are being proactive in reaching out to these communities to ensure that they are centered and not marginalized in the redistricting process.

Thank you,  
Olivia Seideman

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